

THE  
LAST  
HURRAH  
(QUITE POSSIBLY)

From: Silver Fern <info@urg.co.nz>  
To: <wbs@slingshot.co.nz>  
Subject: Merry Christmas  
Date sent: Thu, 19 Dec 2024 22:02:40 +0000  
Send reply to: Silver Fern <info@urg.co.nz>

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Merry Christmas Rally Enthusiasts,

Wow, what an event! The NZ Silver Fern Rally 2024 edition was simply amazing.

Thank you all for your support. The weather played its part, and the scenery was on display for everyone to see.

We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did, bringing it to you.

The office will be closed from today for a well-earned summer break and will reopen on the 20<sup>th</sup> January.

Take time to recharge yourselves and enjoy the time with your family and friends.

Peter Martin - Event Director

# MAP of where we went



## MAIN CHARACTERS



Wazza and Lex with Izzy and Rodney

## INTRODUCTION

In November 2024 Warwick (84) and Lex (17) from Duck Creek Pauanui agreed to help out as a finish timing crew for this years Silver Fern Rally.

We did 4,910 kms while away and Lex probably drove something over 4,600 of it, he struck gravel roads, mountain passes, gorges, many one way bridges, motorways and of course on and off the interislander ferry in our Toyota Corola Ist (Izzy). Well done Lex.

We have been instructed to aim for at least 10,000 words - so sit back and enjoy what we hope is an enjoyable and perhaps 'fantastic' read !!!!

## CHAPTER 1: SOUTHBOUND

As planned we left home at 10 am on the morning of Wednesday 13th of November, heading for our first stop at Turangi, lunch at Tirau, the pies at "the bakery" are really something special.

With SH1 still closed we headed towards Whakamaru (no ice cream's this time) and our good friend Rodney decided to take us via west taupo - after all we were indeed headed for Turangi.

I stayed at a motel in Tokaanu/ i am appalled at what the Maori's have done to THC Tokaanu, Burger king for tea the first night but then a lovely meal at Riverside restaurant the second night.

They opened at 5:30 pm, I was there at 5:35 and got the second to last table, I am not surprised that the place is so popular.

I collected Lex the next morning but he was unwell so unfortunately i had to drive to Wellington.

The new Kapiti expressway is something to behold, we stayed with Kate and Sean a couple of nights, then caught the interislander ferry at lunch time on Sunday the 17th.

On arrival in Blenheim we sought out James grandmother Lorraine, who i am pleased to say remains fit and well and was happy to have me stay, meanwhile Lex managed to catch up and stay with his uncle and cousins, once I collected him, Lex drove pretty much everywhere from then on.

Lunch at Kaikoura thence descending upon my good friend Bob. at least there were only two of us this time, unlike previous occasions where he had been stuck with up to fifteen people, once more he treated us very well indeed.

Thanks EVER so much BOB !!

## CHAPTER 2: CHRISTCHURCH

Lex spent the afternoon with my computer guru (Pieter) - after all it will fall to Lex to update and manage our "Simply Better Team" website in the future.

On a nostalgic note I revisited unit 8/75 Peterborough Street and after a coffee with our former landlord Steve, he showed us what had become what used to be our premises.

Continuing the nostalgic theme I arranged several photographs to be taken of (old )SBT staff this included:

The original staff

SBT computing

Shuttle Bus Transport

SBT Motorsport

many thanks to those who actually made this photo shoot:

Aja

Wbs

Pieter

Lex (representing Steve, his grandfather)

Bob

Brian

Kate

Lisa

After this I managed to get Lex backstage at our James Hay theatre - no mean feat really, he also got an audience view of the town hall auditorium.

We then attempted to drive the length of the summit road but got turned back about half way so we went back down the hill to Governors bay, back through the Lyttelton road tunnel and back to Bob's for a well earned lie down.

As a small thank you we took Bob out to dinner at Chats (Oh the memories of this place).

## CHAPTER 3: EVENT ITSELF

We collected the gear from Riccarton raceway including signs, stakes, cones and of course the rallysafe tablet

Back to Bobs where Jesy came and had to fit his fleetlink radio.

I am eternally grateful that mine is now permanently installed,

On Saturday the 23rd we collected Lisa, who has previously done flying finish (in the "bomb drop" days) and subserviently the important job of being a block marshal, today though she was to be our driver and do road for me.



Our first stage was out the back of Cheviot and our second one not far from Liethfield. a field of nearly 100 cars was somewhat a hock for us.

Sunday 24th we were OTG at 6:30 am, Lex drove Porters pass to our stage (SS12) at Lake Lyndon, on this stage our fleet link did not work (it is after all a long way from civilization), but being so highup I had lived in hope.

Lunch at Springfield (Bart Simpson was sadly not there) then onto Geraldine, I got the address wrong but Lex coped.

Dinner that night at the pub (again) another first rate meal.

Next dayWe did our job at SS21 then SS25.

We stayed that night at Mt Dobson motel just out of Fairlie and made do with sandwiches for tea.

On wednesday 27th we met our OTG of 8 am and headed for Mckenzie Pass, after driving Burkes pass (twice) Lex had to drive the whole length of the Mckenzie Pass stage, where it was exceptionally windy, even with my substantial 100kg bulk I simply could not stand up and both our signs and cones suffered badly too.

We then did SS33 that afternoon,  
onto Kurow where it was well and truly dark

when we arrived, we ate at the local pub  
(again) and fueled up Izzy.

Meyers pass next morning but it looked very likely that Lex would have to drive the entire Dansy's pass (SS41) that afternoon. but joy, oh joy, by lunchtime SS41 had to be cancelled so we headed for our friends in Waihola.

Unlike 2018 we arrived well before dark, had a cabin each and went to the local pub (again) for what turned out to be another marvelous meal.

Next morning we had an OTG of 8 am (again). our first stage of the day (SS45) was just out of Balclutha, it was another windy one, our afternoon stage was back in Dunedin and suprisingly we made it on site with two hours to spare, once it started to rain I managed to convince a local spectator to do my road job for me.

At this stage it was confirmed that we were no longer permitted to use the Lake Onslow stage which was going to be our last hurrah of the event, so you might think that we could leave Roxburg for the finish at Wanaka at quite a leisurely fashion, not likely!!!!.

We were then allocated an important Block marshalling job at the Old Dunston road inland from Middlemarch, having got to Roxburg very late.

Next morning we had an OTG of 6:30 back to Dunedin and up towards Middlemarch, so much for a leisurly last day, it was however late afternoon when we got to Russell and Jeanette's place in Wanaka, prize giving that night caused Jesy and I to have a "Difference of opinion"

I Maintained that ther were over 1,000 people there, Jesy insisted that there were less than 500, it appears I may have actually been wrong.  
Most unusual.

## HAPTER 4: HOMEWARD BOUND

Saturday the 30th of November, the event itself is over and, of course we have not only fulfilled all of our obligations but also went the extra mile too

I gave Lexus the day off inviting him to "stay in bed" if he wished.

As always Russell and Jeanette were their usual fabulous hosts.

After several discussions it was unanimously decided that Lex should drive us home via the West Coast. which he did.

Coffee and a Scone at Makarora, Lunch at Haast and stayed that night at Fox Glacier Hotel

Next day we headed for Westport where once more we had a great dinner at the local drinking establishment, lo and behold Jesy (now back at work) joined us for a beer or two.

The next day Lex drove through the gorge and

we called into see Mike who had been Jesy's assistant. then onto Blenheim and Lorraine's,

Dinner that night at Bamboo Garden, doggy bags all round so breakfast the next morning was sorted.

We had to catch the ferry early afternoon, Lex is getting quite good at this now, he had to drive aboard but stop in the middle of a very steep ramp between decks, he was very grateful that Izzy is an automatic.

I hate to think what a normal manual would have been like for him.

Another beautifully smooth crossing but spoiled by Wellington, they kept us on board for about half an hour after arriving, then threw us off into wellington peak traffic all the while it was pissing with rain.

Lex managed to negotiate multi-lane traffic with a visibility of pretty much nothing, we called into see Buck and returned our Rallysafe tablet, then onto James and Sophia's where we arrived a lot later than any of us would have liked.

A couple of days there and a birthday cake etc, I also asked James to check our

ocasionally squeaking fan belt, this he did, pronounced it buggered brought a new belt and replaced it - thanks ever so much James. whilst there he did a standerd 200,000 km service check as recommended by Toyota.

We all agreed that whilst getting home the next day would be ideal, we also felt that a solid 6 hour drive (or more) at this stage was not really on, we therefore broke the journey at Debrett's hot pool resort in Taupo, where we had pizza delivered for dinner.

The final day.

OTG at 10 am, but wait theres more.

Knowing that SH1 (the lifeline of the nation) could still be closed, I checked in with 0800 44 44 49 to be told that the road was indeed open again but under stop go control - yeah right.

In point of fact we got all the way to Tokoroa without hinderince but 10km from Putaruru, the road was certanly closed at the whim of NZTA and their contractors, we were then detoured, what seemed to be at least 50 km through local backroads but we eventually made it right back to Tirau and their lovely pies.

I really think that the Minister of Transport and his staff need to remind NZTA that SH1 is indeed the lifeline of the nation and should not be closed on a whim.

Through Matamata, Waitoa, Waihou, Turua, Kopu/Hikuai and home for both of us about 3 pm on Saturday afternoon.

CAST (in order of appearance):

Warwick (enough said)

Lex (he does everything)

Izzy (the car)  
Rodney (who hides inside our Navman)

Jaymie (Lex's Mother)

Kate/Sean (My daughter and her husband)

Lucy (my other daughter)

Lorraine (James grandmother)

BOB (Probably my best friend)

Pieter (Our guru)

Steve (of Fuhrmanns)

Aja (Originally an employee, now friend)

Lisa (Kn own for over thirty years)

Brian (An SBT Stalwart)

Dave (Chief) A friend for over 50 years

Kate (A cofounder of shuttlebus transport)

Jesy (Just a nice guy)

Mike (His assistant)

James/Sophia (my son and daughter in law)

## CONCLUSION

So there you have it. Probably our last one for 2024.

Lex(us) who has only been driving for a couple of months did exceptionally well. He also looked after me - including my eye drops each night.

Tired but happy really does describe it very well.

Some of the crew at the photo shoot



Lex dressed for Prizegiving function

Lisa at work !!!



NOW  
Our daily writeups !



## THE PREVIEW

Hi all

Tomorrow (Wed 13th Lex and I start on our journey south for this year's Silver Fern Rally.

A couple of nights in Turangi, then another couple with Kate and Sean in Wellington.

Our ferry crossing is Sun 17th, a night in Blenheim thence to Christchurch arriving probably on Tues 19 or thereabouts.

We collect the gear from Riccarton Raceway on Friday 22nd and should be able to send our 'Prologue' out that night.

The event itself kicks off Sat 23rd and after traversing most of the mainland, finishes in Wanaka on Friday 29th.

We expect to spend that Friday and Sat nights with Russell and Jeanette (formerly of Forest Range Station) and then head home (via West Coast, and perhaps Nelson) on the Sunday.

Our ferry booking northbound is lunchtime 4th December.

We shall then head for Palmerston North (James/Sophia) and plan to be back home

'tired but happy' on the afternoon of 7th  
December.

Mind you there is then an 80th birthday  
gathering to attend in Auckland the next  
weekend!!

I can confirm it is my intention for one of us to  
do the usual daily write up each day so you  
can track our progress adventures, disasters  
(if any) etc.

We shall of course be 'trackable' please let  
me know ASAP if you want login, password  
and other details - it really isn't hard !

## PROLOGUE

Well here we are in Chch at Bob's place  
where we have been almost all week.

We have now done some 1300 kms since  
leaving home

Thanks to all those friends and relations who  
have hosted us to date.

Jaymie, Kate/Shawn, Lorraine, Dane, and of  
course Bob.

We have collected our gear today and got  
ourselves ready for an OTG of 8 am tomorrow  
(Saturday - 23rd)

Once again the Rallysafe is not a tablet, but a  
laptop which, with an expected 108  
competitors at least for the first two days, we  
are likely to need our magic inverter.

tomorrow we do SS4 the 1st stage before  
lunch at Cheviot, then SS8 the last stage of the  
day.

we come back to Bob's tomorrow night.

On sunday we time SS12 at lake lyndon and  
come back to geraldne for the night.  
on monday we do SS21 and SS25 and stay at  
Kimberly.

On tuesday we do SS29 and SS33 and stay  
kourow.

On wednesday after doing SS37 and SS41 we  
then go and stay with our good friends at  
waiola camping ground.

On thursday we go down to balclutha for SS45  
and SS49

## DAY 1

Where do we start.

First of all I must apologize for the truncated prologue last night for some reason my laptop decided to send it as it was instead of saving it for continued words

We were OTG at 8 am this morning, collected our extra crew member (Lisa) and proceeded to our first stage of the rally SS4 out the back of Cheviot.

We were threatened with a field of over 100 cars, but I think it was only ninety-something.

The largest field we've had to deal with to date.

Using the road book Lex managed to find our FF and FC positions without too much difficulty.

We had Lisa on road, Lex did everything as always and Lisa made the comment "He is the only one I've ever taken orders from".

I did nothing (as usual) but talk on the fleetlink

radio which fortunately in our case worked perfectly.

Unfortunately, possibly because of the field size we were very late heading away to our next stage.

We were scared that we may need to charge the rallysafe tablet but lo and behold (oh joy what rapture) such was not the case because the battery was still at 65% after the first stage.

Needless to say we were then late for SS8 and found safety 1 waiting for us, we then set up (again) this time a wee bit faster.

Once again we fulfilled our obligations and to quote one of my comments to Targa base: "That everything was going swimmingly".

Once cleared by the sweep Lisa drove home and Lex drove us back to Bob's place.

When we leave here we will have had been here for almost a week, His hospitality has been first rate, as always.

So when we leave tomorrow he will finally get his house back, No more Lex, No more Me, No more Jesy, No more David.

We have to be OTG at 6:30 tomorrow morning for what could be a long day, although only one stage SS12 Lex will have to drive several hundred Kilometers.

We will be staying at Geraldine tomorrow night.

## DAY 2

Hey it's me Lexus, Warwick has asked me to do today's write up since he had a few glasses of wine while we were getting dinner.

We had an OTG of 6:30 am. My Alarm went off at 5 and Warwicks went off at 6. We left Bob's place on time, got some fuel and continued on our journey.

I drove through kiapoi, south eyre road, waimak gorge, Rakiaa gorge, Sheffield, Springfield and then tackled Porters pass.

We got to our only stage for day 2 (SS12) however we were late setting up due to the ground being not maliable enough for the speed up sign to go in.

After setting up we realized our fleetlink was down and there was no cell service.

for some unknown reason, the powers that be decided to take our fully operational rallysafe and replace it with one that (of course) I therefore had to power up Warwicks laptop, which needs continues power from an inverter (which I also found).

this of course worked pretty well. almost one hundred cars is pretty tough however tomorrow we only have roughly half.

We had lunch at Springfield (Bart Simpson's home town), which was very nice.

Using the inland scenic route we got to Geraldine earlier than we expected to.

Warwick (somehow) managed to give Rodney (the GPS) the wrong address, this caused us some problems. but collectively we coped.

So here we are at Route 79 holiday park. I took the grumpy old fella back into Geraldine for dinner.

I had lemon lime & bitters while he had wine after wine.

Overall a very good dinner.

We are OTG at 10 for our stages tomorrow (SS21 and SS25), our arrival time for the first one being 12:05.

More news tomorrow.

## DAY 3

Wow.

This is Wazza, as Lex said last night we stayed at Route 79 holiday park even though i put the wrong address into Rodney.

We had a lovely meal at the pub (no mount difficulty) but the resling was really nice.

I actually slept quite well until rudely awakened by the alarm that Lexus had set for 5 am.

After our up&go for breakfast we proceeded quietly and steadily using the route that Lex had determined to SS21 where we arrived with heaps of time to spare.

It was marvoulus that the field is genuine silver fern competitors only.

this means less than sixty competitors rather than the nearly one hundred we had over the last two days.

as you will all know by now I do road, which involves taking the card from a competitor, passing it through the open car window and then returning it.

## LEX DOES EVERYTHING ELSE

He sets out all the signs, thanks Dave the hatchet was worth having, sets out the chicane then powers up the what used to be rallysafe tablet but is now my own laptop.

In the car he receives the card from me, writes the competitors time as shown on the laptop then hands the card back to me.

he also has to do the finish control log and the appropriate criss cross sheet - but we still have some problems with the start orders as written by the start crew.

we also had a visit from the Black Magic media camera man so it is possible that we may feature in some way.

once cleared we proceeded post haste to SS25 but here things went somewhat awry.

we had plotted a direct route all the way to our finish however it transpired to bring us to a point where the road was closed for a previous stage.

after a considerable amount of consternation Lex managed to devise a work around (old school triallers will understand, first right

second left, straight through intersection etc)  
this made us at least half an hour late and was  
not good news.

however we did infact make our presence felt  
and completed the task.

so here we are at fairlie(worn out), we have  
re-fueled and brought some stuff from the  
service station for tea.

we expect a OTG of 8 tomorrow which will  
indeed be another big driving day (thanks  
Lex).

## DAY 4

Hi this is Lexus again, I'm doing the write up for today so here we go.

Last night we stayed in the Mt Dobson motel at Fairlie and we met our OTG of 8 this morning.

having already fueled the night before so we didn't have to worry about it

We headed to our first stage for the day (SS29), Warwick stuffed up the which end of the road we were on so I had to drive Burkes pass twice and the length of McKenzie pass once.

If I were to describe this stage in one word it would be: Windy...very...very...windy.

Warwick had to stay in the car with me otherwise he would have been sent to the stratosphere, as happened to all of our signs and cones.

The cars were very cooperative in coming just close enough for me to grab the card by myself (Warwick was just there for moral support I guess).

After being let go we started on our next stage of the day (SS33) where we were only marginally late (a big thanks goes out to all the Targa officials who helped).

Not being cleared until after 6 meant that we got to our accommodation in Kurow after 8 :(

We then had a meal at Waitiaki hotel, as the sober driver my drink was free.

once more Warwick managed several Gins.

OTG in the morning 8 am (again) so we can do Meyers Pass (SS37) and so I can traverse Dansy's Pass (SS41).

I insist Warwick does tomorrows Write up so more from him then.

## DAY 5

Hi

This is Wazza (the Boss) again.

Here we are at Waihola holiday Park, which by my count makes it the 4th time here over a number of years.

Lex and I have just had a lovely meal at the restaurant - I had a full fish with the trimmings, Lex had his usual fancy burger - then dessert, of course. yes I had a large wine.

But back to why we are really here: We stayed at Kurow motel last night and went out for dinner. Topped fuel again for what we knew was going to be another BIG day.

This time it was Lex/Road book/Rodney that took us to the wrong place - but sorted.

Whilst we (Lex and I) have been working like a well oiled machine the same cannot be said about my good mate Jesy and his off sider Mike.

Car troubles (major) has required an 'all hands to the pump' scenerio Once again - happy to help

This morning was not the gale force wind of yesterday, instead it started off cold but rapidly warmed up. Just like a crew member I could mention !!

The best news of the day (for us anyway) was the stage 41 had been cancelled. Not good news for organisers or competitors, but it meant that Lex no longer had to drive the entire Dansey's pass road instead we could head direct here. Oh Joy what rapture!!!!!!

After all he has already driven Porter's Pass twice, the various gorges around mid canterbury, Burkes Pass twice Mackenzie pass.etc.

Tomorrow will be another long day. Starting at Balclutha in the morning - then the last of the day back in Dunedin 'central' driving another couple of hours to where we are staying in Roxburg.

If all goes well you will hear from us then !!

## DAY 6

Hey its me Lexus writing tonights write up so  
here we go.

Here we are at Roxburg holiday park, a saga  
in itself, please read on.

This morning we met our OTG of 8 am (of  
course) and went to SS45 just out of  
Balclutha.

Another windy stage, not as windy as  
McKenzie pass (So Warwick didn't get sent  
into the stratosphere) but still windy anyway.

Once cleared we headed for SS49 (Whare  
flat) just out of Dunedin, Warwick keeps telling  
me that the driving time allowances given to  
us for our second stages of the day are  
usually very tight. (cause of course they are)

it was somewhat surprising to find that when  
we got to our spot (remember I do all the  
driving now), we were actually 2 hours ahead  
of when we needed to be there.

this time it rained (for the first time on the  
event so far)

So Warwick, (pulling the age card) convinced

a local marshal to do his job in the rain  
(cheers Warwick).

We then discovered that our one and only  
stage tomorrow SS54 had been canceled  
because we are unable to use lake onslow  
road after all.

this meant that from our accommodation here  
(instead of having a chill OTG of 2 pm) we  
could now leave for Wanaka after a good  
night sleep...but wait...theres more.

With the above in mind we were asked if we  
could be block marshals on SS52 and of  
course Warwick (not being able to help  
himself) said yes (Big mistake).

We still headed for Roxburg and rang  
Roxburg motel where he thought we had  
booked in, but he was wrong, however  
Roxburg holiday park rung us to ask where we  
were, so that was sorted.

Sadly it was after 9 pm when we arrived and it  
seems that tommorow morning will require an  
OTG of 6:30 (at the latest) as I will now need  
well over 2 hours to drive us to our block  
marshalling point.

some of which is through SS52. (Yayyyyyyyyyy

Anyway its getting quite late so I'll be off now.  
Warwick is doing the Write up for tomorrow,  
so more from him then.

## DAY 7

Bingo, Finish, Finito, whatever

Here we are at Wanaka, and the event has finished - once again we have fulfilled ALL our obligations.

We have done 3360 km so far. Lex has driven the vast majority of that.

We had OTG 6.30 this morning, Lex drove all the wayback to Dunedin and then almost as far as Middlemarch.

We block marshalled at 'Old Dunstan Road, then once cleared headed for Wanaka - another 3 or more hor drive.

Yes Jesy I know it is the responsibility of the Block Marshal to detap ,but you Did offer thanks.

I would have to say that Prizegiving really was ' good idea- disn't work'. But I am really just being a 'grumpy old man'

We are staying with Good friends Russell and Jeanette here and I just know that Lex will spend most of the day in bed tomorrow.

We still hhave [robably another2000 km to get

home - oh joy.

Once home you can expect a somewhat  
fulsome 'blowby blow' epilogue to giggle over.

Till then  
Warwick (Wazza) and Lex (Lexus)

Silver Fern Rally 2024 Timing Team Finish #4